

**AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION****In the specification**

Please replace paragraph [0005] with the following paragraph:

[0005] Various devices have been devised for holding, separating and/or protecting golf clubs. Examples of such devices are disclosed in U.S. Pat. No. 4,746,014 issued May 24, 1988 to Very; U.S. Pat. No. 5,050,884 issued Sep. 24, 1991 to Flory; U.S. Pat. No. ~~5,905,823~~ 5,950,823 issued Sep. 14, 1999 to Flis; U.S. Pat. No. 6,343,692 issued Feb. 5, 2002 to Park; U.S. Pat. App. Pub. No. 2002/0108873 published Aug. 15, 2002 by St. Jeor; U.S. Pat. App. Pub. No. 2002/0132679 published Sep. 19, 2002 by Wilde et al.; Japan Pat. No. JP 09-302,577 issued May 25, 1999 to Nishimura et al.; each of which is incorporated here in by reference in its entirety.

Please replace paragraph [0042] with the following paragraph:

[0042] In an alternative design, the grippers 14 are comprised of separate parts that are connected to an inner tube 12 to form the inner sleeve 2. FIG. 2A illustrates one example of such a design. The inner sleeve 2 is shown in its extended or up position. The connection joints 28 where the gripper elements 16 are connected to the inner tube 12 may be spring-loaded such that the ~~gripper elements 14~~ gripper elements 14a tend to ~~expand~~ expand outward away from the central axis of the outer tube 4. When the inner sleeve 2 is pushed downward, as shown in FIG. 2B, the wall of the outer tube forces the ~~gripper elements 14~~ gripper elements 14a to close and move towards the central axis of the outer tube 4 to trap a golf club. The ~~gripper element 14~~ gripper element 14a may be configured to trap the club head and/or the shaft of the golf club.

Please replace paragraph [0043] with the following paragraph:

[0043] In one variation the spring 10 has a weak bias such that when a golf club is placed inside the inner sleeve the weight of the club will force the inner sleeve to slide downward and

consequently forcing the ~~gripper elements 14~~ gripper elements 14a to close. In another variation, the spring 10 has a strong bias such that when a golf club is placed inside the inner sleeve the inner sleeve 2 will maintain its extended or up position. The user may force the inner sleeve 2 to retract by pushing down on the golf club. A latch or locking mechanism may be provided to secure the inner sleeve in the retracted position. When the user desires to use the golf club, he may release the locking mechanism and the inner sleeve will popup and releases the grippers. A push-and-release locking mechanism described above may also be implemented in this variation. Alternatively, a ~~latch 26~~ latch 26a may be built into the outer tube 4 for keeping the inner sleeve 2 in the retracted position as seen in FIG. 2C. Grooves 32 on the inner surface of the outer tube 4 and corresponding guides 34 on the outer surface of the inner sleeve 2 may be provided to prevent the inner sleeve 2 from rotating relative to the outer tube 4, as illustrated in FIG. 2D. Alternatively, the grooves may be placed on the inner sleeve and the guides positioned on the outer tube.

Please replace paragraph [0046] with the following paragraph:

[0046] In another variation, the gripper 14 is positioned on the midsection 38 of the inner sleeve 2 and hidden from view inside the outer tube. In one example, as seen in FIG. 3, the ~~gripper element 14~~ gripper element 14b comprises a conical shaped surface that is flexible, and a soft pile material 40 is attached to the inner surface of the cone for trapping the shaft of a golf club. The inner sleeve 2 is shown in an extended or up position in FIG. 3. When the inner sleeve 2 is pushed downward into the outer tube 4, the guide 42 or contour on the inner surface of the outer tube will force the conical shaped gripper to collapse inward and trapping the shaft of the golf club. In another variation, the gripper comprises a clamp for trapping the shaft.

Please replace paragraph [0047] with the following paragraph:

[0047] In another design variation, the gripper elements 14 extend from the upper portion of the “outer” tube 4. In one example, shown in FIG. 4, elongated structures are connected at the top end of the outer tube to form the ~~gripper elements 14~~ gripper elements 14c. Interlocking connectors 44 are built into the outer tube 4 so that movement of the inner sleeve 2 will result in opening or

closing of the ~~gripper elements 14~~ gripper elements 14c. When the inner sleeve 2 is raised, the inner sleeve 2 pushes on the interlocking elements 44, which forces the ~~gripper element 14~~ gripper element 14c to open and release the golf club. When the inner sleeve 2 is lowered, the inner sleeve 2 pulls on the interlocking elements 44, which forces the ~~gripper element 14~~ gripper element 14c to close and traps the golf clubs inside the inner sleeve 2. The ~~gripper elements 14~~ gripper elements 14c may be configured to trap the club head, the shaft or both parts of the golf club. The ~~gripper elements 14~~ gripper elements 14c may be configured such that there is room for the user to access and grab the golf club even when the ~~gripper elements 14~~ gripper elements 14c are closed. The apparatus may be configured with a biasing element 10 so that the inner sleeve would retract when a golf club is placed inside the inner sleeve 2. Alternatively, the apparatus may be configured with a stronger biasing element 10 so that the inner sleeve 2 would maintain in its extended or up position when a golf club is placed inside the inner sleeve 2. The user would have to push down on the golf club to force the inner sleeve 2 to retract and move downward. A locking mechanism 22 and/or latches may be provided to secure the inner sleeve 2 at the retracted or down position at the user's discretion. The apparatus may be configured so that when the inner sleeve 2 is in the extended or up position the top portion of the inner sleeve 2 will extend beyond the top end of the outer tube. Alternatively, the apparatus may be configured so that when the inner sleeve 2 is in the extended or up position the top portion of the inner sleeve 2 will not extend beyond the top end of the outer tube

4.